



Mr J Gale  
Headteacher  
Colonel Frank Seely Academy  
Flatts Lane  
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Nottinghamshire  
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Dear Mr Gale,

### **Association for Character Education Kitemark Assessment (July 2022)**

Following an evaluative visit to the Colonel Frank Seely Academy on Tuesday 5 July 2022 by Tom Haigh, CEO of the Association of Character Education, and Andrew Pettit, Kitemark Assessor for the Association for Character Education, we are very pleased to confirm that your school has met the exacting standards required to be awarded the 'School of Character' Kitemark.

Huge congratulations to you, your students, staff and governors. This award is testament to the values-driven commitment to personal development so evident in your school. It is clear that there is a shared sense of mission at CFSA and that, through the determined and sustained leadership of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team since 2018, the school has developed a co-ordinated, research-informed and carefully planned character education strategy which is designed to impact all aspects of pupils' academic and pastoral growth.

It is always reassuring to visit a school where values and a genuine commitment to character education are at the core of all activities and are threaded through the 'DNA' of the school. It was especially notable that the seven core values adopted by the school have been shaped through careful and deliberate engagement with the identified needs of the pupils and the wider community and that character is viewed as an instrumental part of the school's inclusive and ambitious ethos where success for all is a key driver.

It was evident during our visit that leaders at CFSA have fostered a strong sense of community and that the emphasis placed on CFSA as a 'family' and the relentless focus on 'why' have contributed to a powerful foundation of trust, collaboration and mutual understanding. This has helped create the conditions in which staff and students can flourish and where character development is an authentic and sustained part of what it means to be a student at Colonel Frank Seely Academy. There are very many strengths in the current provision, including:

#### **Identified Strengths**

- The school has a well-understood set of character values (Resilience, Independence, Critical thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, Leadership, Risk Taking) and it is clear that these values form part of the pupils' everyday experiences at school.

- The tutor programme introduced in 2021-22 is very strong and provides pupils with a highly valued and carefully sequenced programme of study focused exclusively on character and the CFSA 7 in particular.
- The 7 character values are also reinforced in a systematic way through a well-designed assembly programme and through direct links to the school's well-established House Point system as well as the Pledge Passports.
- The school routinely communicates pupils' character achievements through its online platform 'Satchel 1'.
- Character development is further celebrated and reinforced through regular celebration assemblies, awards and badges.
- The Pledge Passports are highly effective in providing pupils (and staff) with a means by which to reflect, identify gaps and set personal challenges to help them move forward in developing their character.
- The school's strong emphasis on the development of oracy empowers pupils and directly addresses some of the key contextual barriers to flourishing.
- Pupils and staff at all levels clearly value the school's approach to positive reinforcement and the 7 core values provide a framework for and a shared language with which to address reminders about behaviour.
- The school's vertical tutoring system adds real strength to its focus on character development by helping to foster positive relationships across different year groups and by helping to establish a socially collaborative, cohesive community.
- Vertical tutoring is used as a deliberate means by which older students are seated with younger peers and this has led to the natural development of peer-to-peer role modelling (outside of and in addition to any formalised mentoring or buddy schemes)
- The Head Teacher takes a purposeful and explicit approach to the ongoing development of the school's culture and this is done in a collaborative manner which models and reinforces the school's core values.
- There are well-established routines for the positive reinforcement of character traits including daily line-up.
- There are strong mechanisms in place for tracking pupil involvement in enrichment and this is used to inform strategies to increase levels of participation.
- Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of role-modelling by staff and this is carried through in a number of ways including staff committing to their own character 'Pledges'.
- The 7 character values have been embraced by staff and this is leading to deliberate and explicit reinforcement across many parts of the curriculum.
- There is a real sense of pride in the school's culture and this is reflected in the exemplary standards of behaviour and attitudes observed by the assessors throughout their visit.
- Governors are well-informed about the school's priorities, are closely aligned with the school's focus on and ambitions for character education and the provision of a link governor for character education provides for an enhanced level of QA.
- The innovative use of character only homework during the holidays provides a further means by which the link between home and school is strengthened.

It is clear that Colonel Frank Seely is a community-focused school and that there is a strong emphasis on pastoral support, pupil welfare and personal development alongside an unwavering commitment to securing the best academic outcomes.

The school's values of Resilience, Independence, Critical thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, Leadership and Risk Taking are placed at the core of all activities and by aligning these with the core components of character development such as the 'My character' programme, the school has demonstrated the capacity to ensure that pupils and staff benefit from an authentic and ambitious commitment to character education which is built in rather than 'bolted on'.

Colonel Frank Seely Academy is to be commended for its very well developed and sustained approach to character education and for the values-driven approach that has been taken. It is interesting to note that the school's 7 character values were carefully determined in response to identified needs of pupils and in particular the barriers to achievement that existed in 2018. The emphasis to date has therefore (quite rightly) been largely *instrumental*. There is opportunity now, given the very strong foundations and especially with the expertise of the school's newly-appointed Character Lead to expand the focus of character development and to embrace the flourishing of the individual in all areas of their life and the flourishing of wider society as the ultimate goal of good character. This would be a really powerful way of building on the work already done to instil the virtues of respect and kindness (in connection with collaboration in particular).

In addition, the assessors would recommend that consideration is given to the following areas:

### **Recommended Actions**

- Capitalise on the strength of staff ambition for and commitment to character education by exploring ways to take a more planned approach to integrating character and the CFSA 7 into the core curriculum.
- Build on the strong links with parents by incorporating explicit links to the 7 character values in your regular newsletters / bulletins.
- Further enhance and improve wall displays as a means of supporting character 'caught'
- Give further thought to how you might 'Deconstruct' the school's 7 character values into their component virtue skills and use this as a means to inform the scaffolding of character education as pupils progress through the school.
- Examine ways in which the 7 character values might be incorporated into the progress reports sent home to parents. One element worth considering would be to build this into the criteria you have established for Attitude to Learning.
- Consider the development and dissemination of a 'character map' akin to those developed for curriculum journeys elsewhere.

- Build on staff role-modelling by exploring more formalised ways in which staff reflect on their own character such as through a 360 degree evaluation as part of the appraisal process.
- Encourage teachers to deepen and develop their knowledge of character education and its underpinning theories by accessing CPD from the Jubilee Centre and/or looking at ways the school can draw upon the expertise being developed amongst A Level students about virtue ethics.
- Explore ways in which stronger emphasis can be placed developing habits of service to others through practical experiences of volunteering and social action.
- Consider ways in which the school's website can be used as a means of better communicating the school's commitment to character education. Any visitor to the website should be aware that this is a 'school of character'.

Congratulations again to you and your colleagues at Colonel Frank Seely Academy. We have no doubt that you will continue with your ambitious and authentic commitment to character education and would actively encourage you to share your successes with other schools on a similar journey.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Pettit', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

Mr Andrew Pettit  
ACE Kitemark Assessor

Mr Tom Haigh  
CEO

(on behalf of the Association for Character Education)